



James Harrison is in his third year of teaching Algebra at Rhea County High School in Evensville, in Eastern Tennessee.

Four years ago, he was in the engineering/technical field in the nuclear industry, a job he had held for 16 years.

"I was working, making good money... but now I'm truly happy. This changed my life," he said.

James said that since he started teaching, he's had job offers to return to industry but chose to remain a teacher.

"There's not a day that goes by that I dread going to school," he said.

James had thought about teaching throughout his career, and he started thinking about alternative licensure, which brought him to **Teach Tennessee**. He explored other licensure programs, but found **Teach Tennessee** to be the best and the most convenient.

"With other programs, you have to take more traditional classes, but **Teach Tennessee** truly lets you use your experience, and they teach you how to teach," he said.

It's that instruction that can prove elusive for prospective teachers who are already in the workforce.

"You can't stop your life. Most people can't quit their job, and go back to school, and there's very little offered in the evenings," he said.

James explained that, based on his research, **Teach Tennessee's** program was the only program that would let him continue working while transitioning from his old career to his new one. It's a transition that was virtually seamless, thanks to the design of the program and its core professional development components.

The rigorous initial and ongoing training sessions have had a positive impact on his teaching style.

"The first year, someone from the state comes in and observes regularly, and you have to write a weekly reflection paper to recap your work."

From those write-ups and observations, suggestions are given, and improvements made.

By all measurements, James has been quite successful. He is one of several **Teach Tennessee** fellows whose students have shown marked improvements in test scores.

He's proud of these achievements. "It's like being a coach, or even a parent. At the end of the year, you have these kids, you've taught them. And when everyone is successful... well, you can't put a dollar amount on that. The kids appreciate it. And that's really rewarding."